

## Empires Lost: Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union

The area Americans now refer to interchangeably as Russia and the Soviet Union covered one-sixth of the world's land mass, contains five time zones and many separate linguistic and culture groups. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) as the federation has called itself from December 30, 1922 until ~~December 21, 1991 was a collection of 15 republics united under the leadership and control of the Communist Party. The republics held very little authority or autonomy until several declared independence from the Soviet Union was made official on December 21, 1991~~ when 11 republics signed an agreement to create the Commonwealth of Independence States a loose confederation pledging cooperation on economic and military matters. The states of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Georgia have not joined the new Commonwealth and remain independent countries. This agreement marks the end of 74 years of Communist domination over an empire of Russian, Asian, and Baltic republics just a few days short of the USSR's 69th official birthday.

### Counterfeit Rubles

25 Ruble note of 1811 is a French counterfeit made and used by Napoleon's army when they invaded Russia in 1812. This is another example of counterfeiting being used as a military weapon to destabilize enemy countries and possibly to obtain supplies for the invading army. The defeat of Napoleon by a combination of Czar Alexander I's refusal to surrender, impossible French supply problems and a brave and tenacious Russian army is one of the country's most cherished military successes. Numerous literary works and poems including Tolstoy's *War and Peace* were based on the events of that year.

#### 1 Ruble 1866

Finance Minister Count Sergei Witte reformed Russian currency and put the country on a gold standard in 1897. As part of that reform, all pre-1898 currency was to be destroyed as it was turned in to the treasury. This 1866 ruble note escaped from that redemption effort.

PROOF #1

didn't see  
the new  
version...  
will correct

8"x2.5" Sorry!

5"

5"



The patriotic notes of 1938 picture a miner, an aviator and an infantryman. These along with the 5 ruble note of 1925 with \* its depiction of the perfect worker are examples of the "New Soviet Man" who symbolizes the strength and prowess of the Soviet Union.

10" x 1.5"

1 ruble silver  
coin dated 1924.

The worker  
joined with the  
farmer pointing  
to the rising sun  
of a communist  
future.

2"

Commemorative  
1 ruble coin  
minted in 1970  
celebrating the  
centennial of  
Lenin's birthday  
in 1870.

2"

1829 1 ruble silver. This coin features the Russian Imperial eagle which ironically was borrowed from the Byzantine empire. The eagle's two heads symbolize a nation looking both to the East and to the West. This was a fitting symbol for a country which was involved in war of expansion or repression nearly continuously for over 300 years.

4"



Kerensky Notes. These 20 and 40 ruble notes were issued by the official Provisional Government of Russia which succeeded Nicholas II. There were printed in 1917. These notes were based on customs revenue stamps much like American tax stamps. Alexander Kerensky's government was ousted by the Bolshevik October Revolution in Moscow in 1917.

3"

### Nicholas I 1825-1855

Nicholas I was energetic and hardworking as Czar. A military man, he was often involved in minute details of <sup>his</sup> programs. His personal passion was constructing fortifications. His aim was order and loyalty in the larger Russian society. He was obsessed with preventing subversion and revolution and resolutely determined to maintain the power and prestige of the Czarist regime. He feared both popular peasant revolts as well as treachery from the nobles against autocratic rule. He grew reactionary in his policies, but little was accomplished during his reign except enlarging the Russian bureaucracy and creating a secret police force.

\*

6"

### Imperial Inflation

Inflation during the 1915-1919 period was rather high, in part because of World War I and because people were losing confidence in the government. Notice the denominations of these bills range from 5 rubles to 5,000 rubles and they are all from the same year 1918. They prominently feature the Imperial double eagle, symbol of the Czar. These were among the last imperial

5"

*Ironically, the Communists used the plates from imperial banknotes, which accounts in part for the wide variety of denominations. until 1920*

200 rubles from 1917. Russians also celebrated military heroes on their money as illustrated by the statue of General Michael Skobelev. He <sup>w</sup>as instrumental in defeating the Khanates of Kokand, Bokhara and Khiva in Central Asia between 1865-1876. These regions were conquered for their rich harvests of cotton and other essential raw materials. These wars were similar to American Westward Expansion.

\*

6"



## Catherine the Great (Catherine II) 1762-1796

\* Catherine was a broadly educated, intelligent and ambitious empress who came to power by a palace coup in 1762. In foreign affairs, her reign saw the first of two victories over Turkey with a vast expansion of southern Russia as well as the partitioning of Poland which also added to Russian territory. Domestically Catherine tried unsuccessfully to bring ideas from the French Enlightenment to Russia. Ironically, Catherine's strong autocracy contributed to the failure of her enlightenment reforms. In fact, the privileges of the nobility were codified by Catherine and reach<sup>ed</sup> their apex during her reign. She also reformed local government and created provinces<sup>es</sup> from the Pugachev rebellion in which thousands of serfs rebelled in the Ural mountain area. This massive rebellion was put down with some difficulty and Pugachev was executed. Catherine's infamous private life has been badly distorted by popular accounts. Reality seems interesting enough when one notes that Catherine had 21 lovers in just under 52 years. She married unhappily when she was 15, and escaped the marriage when she became Empress at age 33. During her reign, she frequently took lovers. Gregory Potemkin, one of her favorite \* lovers, spent 13 years in charge of what one historian called Catherine's "male harem" after he personally fell out of favor with her. 8"

/ to decentralize government power.  
Catherine Faced a threat /  
(missed a line)

### Russian Inflation

The Revolution and civil war<sup>s</sup> which follow<sup>ed</sup> took a terrible toll on the Russian economy. By the end of 1921, children selling an inferior type of lemonade in the open air markets were charging 1 million rubles a glass. Most transactions were barter exchanges. The deterioration of the exchange rate is listed below: \*

4"x5"

- 1914 - 2 rubles to 1 U.S. dollar →
- 1920 - 1,200 rubles to the dollar
- 1921 - 69,000 rubles to the dollar

} align years    1914    2 ruble  
~~use smaller~~    1920    1,200  
~~this to stress~~    1921    69,000  
~~change~~ (sorry)  
also align numbers  
if possible

### Fighting inflation the Russian Way

This 100 ruble note from 1922 explains the new monetary policy in the center of the bill: "Each ruble from 1922 will be worth 10,000 rubles from before". This straight devaluation is the most direct way to control inflation although it also may be the most painful, and it encourages spending money instead of saving or investing it. The devaluation in 1922 was followed in 1924 by a more drastic measure. Each New Ruble of 1924 was worth 50,000 old rubles (including 1922 rubles).

4"x2"

— smaller  
type?  
(larger than  
2")

OK



The propaganda value of money was not overlooked on these 1000 & 5000 ruble notes of 1919. The slogan "Workers of the World Unite!" appears in Russian, English, French, German, Italian, Arabic and in oriental characters which most Asians can decipher. This note was part of the drive to spread communism globally. Ironically, Soviet currency never circulated outside of the communist bloc, preventing the message from having its intended effect.

6"

This 3 ruble note from 1937 illustrates the breath and diversity of the Soviet Union. The denominations (face value) is listed in eleven distinct languages or dialects. Also on the note is a message, repeated, that this money is good everywhere, in every rep~~u~~blic or region of the Soviet Union.

4"

\*

1909 series of ruble notes were beautifully engraved. Nicholas II did succeed in producing very attractive banknotes, whatever his other shortcomings as a ruler.

4"x4"

The kopek is roughly the equivalent of the U.S. cent in that 100 kopeks equal 1 ruble. In the period between 1915 and 1917 these kopek notes were produced to solve a shortage of small change caused by hoarding. The notes were produced in denominations of 1, 2, 3, 5, and 50 kopeks. The U.S. used similar small change paper money during the U.S. Civil War when people were hoarding metallic money.

5"

\*

1794 copper (5)  
5 kopek coin.

2"

1833 copper 5  
kopek coin with  
the imperial  
eagle.

2"

ok



Vladimir Ilich Ulianov, better known as Lenin, is the father of Soviet Communism. Lenin took the ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels along with his own ideas and created the Soviet bureaucracy. He coined such phrases as "dictatorship of the proletariat" and using the idea of the communist party as the central power in the government. He was the leader of the radical Bolshevik party (initially he was too radical even for the Bolsheviks) but disillusion over World War I helped propel him to a leadership role. Through his efforts, the small Bolshevik party was able to seize control of the government when the Provisional government of Kerensky collapsed in 1917. Lenin was treated with much reverence in Soviet Union, (some say like the Saint of Communism), and accordingly his portrait is on most of the money. Several examples are pictured here, along with a 1970 commemorative 1 ruble coin celebrating the 100th anniversary of his birth.

1 ruble minted in 1730. Portrait of Czarina Anne She was chosen Czarina after small pox killed Peter II at age 15. Anne was supposed to be a puppet ruler for the Supreme Secret Council of Russian nobles. She foiled the plot by disbanding the Council and ruling herself with the help of unpopular German friends and advisers. Although unpopular, she did rule Russia effectively.

Communists of the Bolshevik party ultimately triumphed in the Russian Revolution, but several groups opposed them. Some of the opposition groups came to be known as "Whites" presumably in contrast to the Red Army whom they fought. The Allies including America and Great Britain helped other opposition groups and even invaded Russia near Archangel and Murmansk between late 1918 and January 1920. Generals often established provisional governments in areas they held militarily, hoping to eventually defeat the Red Army. Below are banknotes from two "White" regions, one in Northwest Russia near Estonia and the other in Siberia. Although they failed, the Whites illustrated that there were many possible outcomes to the Russian Revolution, and communism was not the choice of all Russian people.

300 ruble note Siberian Provisional Government 1918.

White Russian commander Admiral Alexander Kolchak, dictator of Siberia, controlled the area from November 1918 until late in 1919. The Red Army captured and shot Admiral Kolchak in February 1920. These notes were printed on Japanese rice paper.



1000 ruble note of 1919 Provisional Government of Northwest Russia. Signed by General Nicholas Iudenich, who was commander of the White Army in that area. The note celebrates a great victory on the Northern Front, however the success did not last. Iudenich disbanded his army in January of 1920. These notes were printed in Stockholm, Sweden.

7"

1947 series of colorful ruble notes. These notes are all slightly different sizes with the size of the note corresponding to the denomination (face value) of the note.

3" x 4"

1937 series ruble notes all feature a large portrait of Lenin. These notes use different color ink as well as different size paper to differentiate the denominations. This practice is the opposite of American currency <sup>which</sup> is all one size and one color scheme with different portraits on each denomination. \*

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The 1961 series of ruble notes was the latest series of ruble notes before the 1991 reform. These notes depict architectural achievements and historic locations with a more stylized portrayal of Lenin than previous issues.

7"

The 50 and 100 ruble notes were demonetized on January 25, 1991, to discourage large cash transactions, especially black market and other illegal speculative activities. The people were given three days in which they could exchange only 1,000 rubles of old notes for lower denomination notes. There were numerous reports of desperate actions including a man burying 6 million rubles, a man paying 1 million rubles for a bottle of vodka and people selling the notes for 10% of face value. For comparison, 150 to 200 rubles has been an acceptable monthly wage for a Russian worker. The Soviets introduced newly designed 50 and 100 ruble notes two days after it demonetized the old 50 & 100 ruble notes. The new notes prominently feature the date 1991 and also have other minor design changes. They replace the 1961 issue. \*

x (burning 7")

demonetized



**Nicholas II**  
**1905-1917**

Silver medal and 1 silver <sup>ruble</sup> coin of 1912 with a portrait of Czar Nicholas II. He was the Czar ousted by a Provisional government led by Alexander Kerensky and Count Luvov in March 1917. Nicholas II is remembered as a reactionary leader who was trying to undo liberal reforms and bring back respect for tradition, orthodoxy and autocracy. He and his family were imprisoned in the town of Ekaternburg. July 16, 1918, Nicholas II and his family were executed because ~~opposition~~ counter revolutionary armies were approaching the town and local Bolsheviks feared the restoration of Nicholas II.

**Peter the Great (Peter I) 1682-1725**

This 1 ruble silver coin minted in 1721 and this 500 ruble banknote from 1912 feature the portrait of Peter. At over seven feet tall, he literally towered over his contemporaries. Peter reformed almost every aspect of Russian life. He "Westernized" Russia during his reign. He brought European ideas about most aspects of life to Russia. ~~he brought the Gregorian calendar beginning at 1 A.D.~~ Peter reformed the educational system, reorganized central and local government to make officials more accountable as well as the Church hierarchy. He professionalized the Army and created a navy from scratch which drew the concern of England, the greatest naval power of the era. Peter was no democrat, believing like the rest of Europe and Asia at the time in strong autocracy. He didn't like to be opposed and could be quite ruthless. Much like Mikhail Gorbachev, Peter brought too many changes too quickly and many of them reversed after his death or lapsed through neglect.

↓  
were

9" x 3 1/2"



Far Eastern Provisional Government. 100  
rubles 1918. Printed by American Bank  
Note Co. This government was aided by  
the Allies but also only lasted until 1920.

4"

10" x 3

# IMPERIAL RUSSIA

Need  
whole A

# SOVIET UNION





[center] Empires Lost: Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union

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## Empires Lost: Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union

The area Americans now refer to interchangeably as Russia and the Soviet Union covers one-sixth of the world's land mass, contains five time zones and many separate linguistic and ethnic-cultural groups. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) as the federation called itself from December 30, 1922 to the present is a collection of 15 republics federated under the leadership of the Communist party. The republics held a very limited amount of autonomy and self determination until quite recently. Current events in this area are moving at a dizzying pace, but one thing seems certain, the Communist control over an empire of Russian and Asian republics is over after nearly 70 years of unchallenged hegemony. ( 8" by 2.5") \*\*changed, see FED.doc\*\*

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1 ruble 1866

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1 ruble silver coin dated 1924. The worker joined with the farmer pointing to the rising sun of a communist future. (2"wide)

Commemorative 1 ruble coin minted in 1970 celebrating the centennial of Lenin's birth in 1870. (2" wide)

1829 1 ruble silver. This coin features the Russian Imperial eagle which ironically was borrowed from the Byzantine empire. The eagles two heads symbolize a nation looking both to the East and to the West. This was a fitting symbol for a country which was involved in war of expansion or repression nearly continuously for over 300 years. (4" wide)



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[center] Imperial Inflation

Inflation during the 1915-1919 period was rather high, in part because of World War I and because people were losing confidence in the government. Notice the denominations of these bills range from 5 rubles to 5000 rubles and they are all from the same year 1918. They prominently feature the Imperial double eagle, symbol of the Czar. These were among the last imperial bank notes. (5" wide)

200 rubles from 1917. Russians also celebrated military heroes on their money as illustrated by the statue of General Michael Skobelev. He was instrumental in defeating the Khanates of Kokand, Bokhara and Khiva in Central Asia between 1865-1876. These regions were conquered for their rich harvests of cotton and other essential raw materials. These wars were similar to American Westward Expansion. (6" wide)



[centered]

Catherine the Great (Catherine II)

1762-1796

Catherine was a broadly educated intelligent and ambitious empress who came to power by a palace coup in 1762. In foreign affairs, her reign saw the first of two victories over Turkey with a vast expansion of southern Russia as well as the partitioning of Poland which also added to Russian territory. Domestically Catherine tried unsuccessfully to bring ideas from the French Enlightenment to Russia. Ironically, Catherine's strong autocracy contributed to the failure of her enlightenment reforms. In fact, the privileges of the nobility were codified by Catherine and reached their apex during her reign. She also reformed local government and created provinces to decentralize government power. Catherine faced a threat from the Pugachev rebellion in which thousands of serfs rebelled in the Ural mountain area. This massive rebellion was put down with some difficulty and Pugachev was executed. Catherine's infamous private life has been badly distorted by popular accounts. Reality seems interesting enough when one notes that Catherine had 21 lovers in just under 52 years. She married unhappily when she was 15, and escaped the marriage when she became Empress at age 33. During her reign, she frequently took lovers. Gregory Potemkin, one of her favorite lovers, spent 13 years in charge of what one historian called Catherine's "male harem" after he personally fell out of favor with her. (8" wide)

[center]

RUSSIAN INFLATION

The Revolution and civil war which followed took a terrible toll on the Russian economy. By the end of 1921, children selling an inferior type of lemonade in the open air markets were charging 1 million rubles a glass. Most transactions were barter exchanges. The deterioration of the exchange rate is listed below:

[center]

1914 2 rubles to 1 U.S. dollar

1920 1,200 rubles to the dollar

1921 69,000 rubles to the dollar

(4"wide X 5"deep)

[center] Fighting inflation the Russian Way.

This 100 ruble note from 1922 explains the new monetary policy in the center of the bill: "Each ruble from 1922 will be worth 10,000 rubles from before". This straight devaluation is the most direct way to control inflation although it also may be the most painful, and it encourages spending money instead of saving or investing it. The devaluation in 1922 was followed in 1924 by a more drastic measure. Each New Ruble of 1924 was worth 50,000 old rubles (including 1922 rubles). [(4" wide x 2" deep)]



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1909 series of ruble notes were beautifully engraved. Nicholas II did succeed in producing very attractive banknotes, whatever his other shortcomings as a ruler. (4" x 4" max)

The kopek is roughly the equivalent of the U.S. cent in that 100 kopeks equal 1 ruble. In the period between 1915 and 1917 these kopek notes were produced to solve a shortage of small change caused by hoarding. The notes were produced in denominations of 1, 2, 3, 5, and 50 kopeks. The U.S. used similar small change paper money during the U.S. Civil War when people were hoarding metallic money. (5" wide)

1794 copper 5 kopek coin. (2")

1833 copper 5 kopek coin with the imperial eagle. (2")

Vladimir Ilich Ulianov, better known as Lenin, is the father of Soviet Communism. Lenin took the ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels along with his own ideas and created the Soviet bureaucracy. He coined such phrases as "dictatorship of the proletariat" and using the communist party as the central power in the government. He was the leader of the radical Bolshevik party (initially he was too radical even for the Bolsheviks) but disillusion over World War I helped propel him to a leadership role. Through his efforts, the small Bolshevik party was able to seize control of the government when the Provisional government of Kerensky collapsed in 1917. Lenin was treated with much reverence in the Soviet Union, (some say like the Saint of Communism), and accordingly his portrait is on most of the money. Several examples are pictured here, along with a 1970 commemorative 1 ruble coin celebrating the 100th anniversary of his birth. (6" wide & 4.5- 5" deep)



1 ruble minted in 1730. Portrait of Czarina Anne  
She was chosen Czarina after small pox killed Peter II at age 15. Anne was supposed to be a puppet ruler for the Supreme Secret Council of Russian nobles. She foiled the plot by disbanding the Council and ruling herself with the help of unpopular German friends and advisers. Although unpopular, she did rule Russia effectively. (4" wide by 2" deep)

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300 ruble note Siberian Provisional Government 1918.  
White Russian commander Admiral Alexander Kolchak, dictator of Siberia, controlled the area from November 1918 until late in 1919. The Red Army captured and shot Admiral Kolchak in February 1920. These notes were printed on Japanese rice paper. (4." wide)

1000 ruble note of 1919 Provisional Government of Northwest Russia. Signed by General Nicholas Iudenich, who was commander of the White Army in that area. The note celebrates a great victory on the Northern Front, however the success did not last. Iudenich disbanded his army in January of 1920. These notes were printed in Stockholm, Sweden. (up to 7" wide)

1947 series of colorful ruble notes. These notes are all slightly different sizes with the size of the note corresponding to the denomination (face value) of the note. (4" x 4" max) 3" wide best

1937 series ruble notes all feature a large portrait of Lenin. These notes use different color ink as well as different size paper to differentiate the denominations. This practice is the opposite of American currency is all one size and one color scheme with different portraits on each denomination. (6"wide)

The 1961 series of ruble notes was the latest series of ruble notes before the 1991 reform. These notes depict architectural achievements and historic locations with a more stylized portrayal of Lenin than previous issues. (between 6- 8" wide)



The 50 and 100 ruble notes were demonetized on January 25, 1991, to discourage large cash transactions, especially black market and other illegal speculative activities. The people were given three days in which they could exchange only 1,000 rubles of old notes for lower denomination notes. There were numerous reports of desperate actions including a man burning 6 million rubles, a man paying 1 million rubles for a bottle of vodka and people selling the notes for 10% of face value. For comparison, 150 to 200 rubles has been an acceptable monthly wage for a Russian worker. The Soviets introduced newly designed 50 and 100 ruble notes two days after it demonetized the old 50 & 100 ruble notes. The new notes prominently feature the date 1991 and also have other minor design changes. They replace the 1961 issue. (7" WIDE)

[center]                      Nicholas II    1905-1917

Silver medal and 1 ruble silver coin of 1912 with the portrait of Czar Nicholas II. He was the Czar ousted by a Provisional government led by Alexander Kerensky and Count Luvov in March 1917. Nicholas II is remembered as a reactionary leader who was trying to undo liberal reforms and bring back respect for tradition, orthodoxy and autocracy. He and his family were imprisoned in the town of Ekaterinburg. July 16, 1918, Nicholas II and his family were executed because opposition armies were approaching the town and local Bolsheviks feared the restoration of Nicholas II. (4" wide)

[We need to heading signs , one for "Soviet Union" and one for "Imperial Russia" each about 10" long with lettering between 1" and 1.5 " tall as you see fit. Let's say 3" to 3.5" total depth]

[centered]                      Peter the Great (Peter I)    1682-1725

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Far Eastern Provisional Government. 100 rubles 1918. Printed by American Bank Note Co. This government was aided by the Allies but also only lasted until 1920. (4"wide)



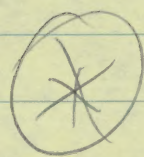
1922 conversion

1 ruble from 1922 replaces 10,000 rubles from before for all debts, public - national currency good in every republic

1917  
AA-079

Provisional gov't money

1 ruble =  $\frac{1}{15}$  imperial



Marc still working on 17,424 ?

1919 National Credit Bank

1919 200 ruble Horse w/ rider

Central Asian  
General  
Michael

M.D. Skobelev - (Hero of Kronstadt?)  
look up

Imperial eagle - transcends CZARISM  
national symbol

1000 Rubles 053798 1919  
celebrating a victory on Northern front on  
Jase  
National Bank

Lenin "Communist money"



## National Bank Notes

---

possibly Field Notes/Bolshevik

small orange & green notes imperial eagle  
are Ruble Notes No date  
~~no authority~~ A credit bank - none specified

---

National Bank Russia

1918 100 Rubles

serial BA 923963

1917

Харѣнн (town?) Harbeen

serial 235023

Asian Bank of Russia

ABN 1 Ruble 1917

authorized by National credit bureau

CZARIST



3 rubles w/ multi languages 1924

block of text → the money (bills) are good everywhere, in every republic or region.

A 010 500 1919 series

Soviet Republics money  
Soviet Federal Republics 1919 series

1919 3 ruble green AA 103

siberian ~~Province~~ note

Provisional Gov't note

A.1001 1918 Blue <sup>orange back</sup> 300 rubles also Siberian Provision

1947 13 different Languages/<sup>dialects</sup> giving the denomination on the bills

5000 Ruble 1918 National Credit bill

1928 2 - Green 819992

2 "Ten Rubles"

Probably  
\*

20 ruble note  
Regional note "CP CP"

Fun one - look at other 1928  
books in books.